

C I V I C D E S I G N

The City of Carmel, Indiana

*Guiding Design Principles for the Future
of Carmel's Central Core*

September 2005

James Brainard, Mayor

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*A Document of the
Carmel Urban Design Initiative*

James Brainard, Mayor

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The City of Carmel
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“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir people’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that your children and grandchildren are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.”

*Daniel H. Burnham, 1910
Architect, City Planner, and Author: The Plan of Chicago*



The Carmel Urban Design Initiative

What is the Carmel Urban Design Initiative?

The Carmel Urban Design Initiative is an education and consensus-building project that has been initiated by the City of Carmel’s Department of Community Services (DOCS) to create a better understanding of important land use issues and introduce urban design principles into the on-going planning of the City of Carmel, Indiana.

Who has sponsored and is leading the Carmel Urban Design Initiative?

The City of Carmel’s Department of Community Services (DOCS) has retained the services of EDEN Land & Design, Inc., an Indianapolis-based land development and planning consultant to lead this effort. Adam Thies, AICP is the president of EDEN and the project facilitator and planning consultant. Adrienne Keeling, AICP is the DOCS project manager.

Why is there a Carmel Urban Design Initiative?

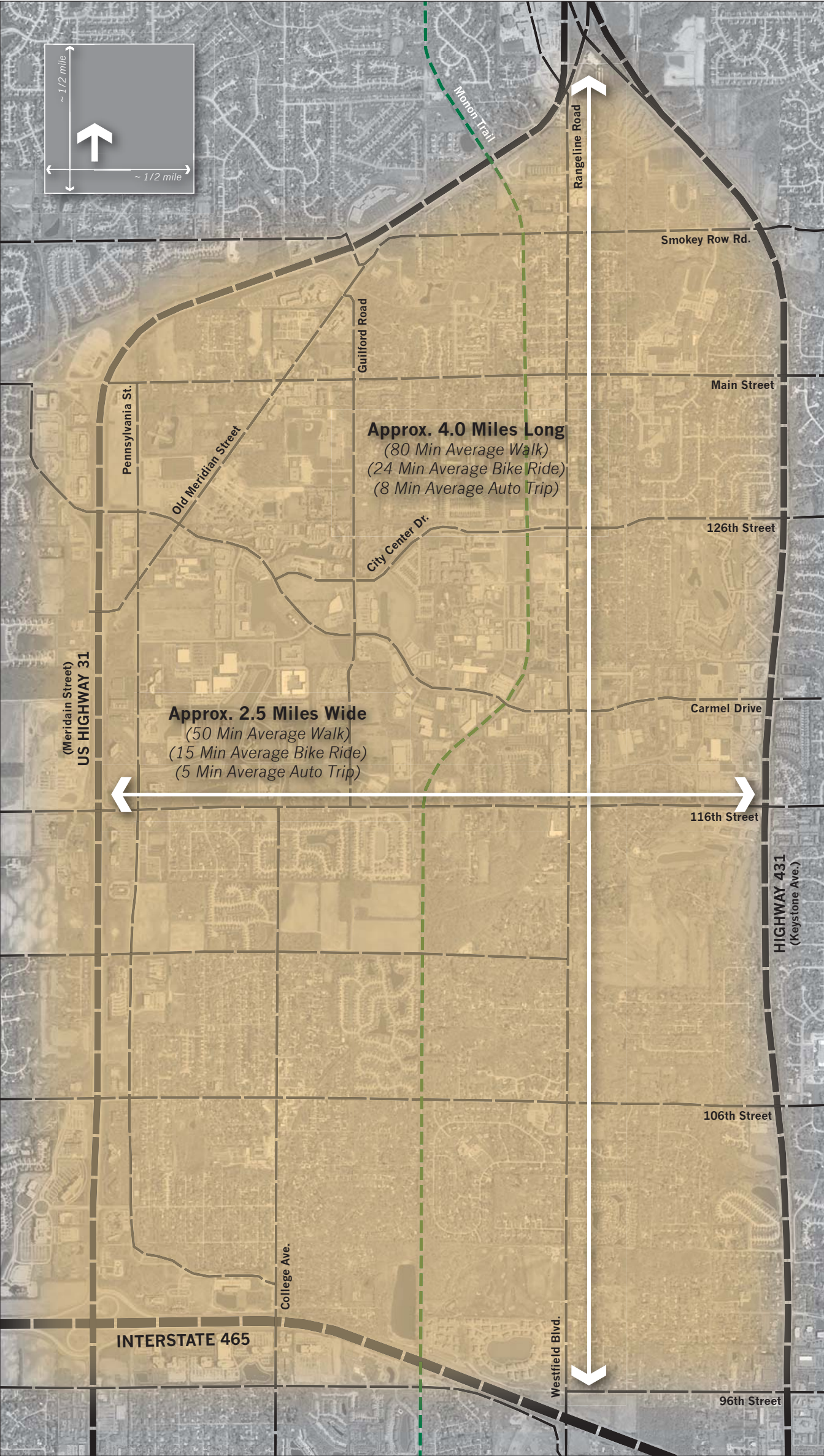
The City of Carmel is at an important junction in her development as a city. As remaining fields give way to new development, build-out of the community is foreseeable within the next ten (10) years. City officials believe the time is right to refine how development occurs in Carmel so we can continue to improve upon our quality of life, enhance our regional competitive position, and ensure a smooth transition as we evolve from a classic American suburb to a place with its own city center and urban quality. In addition, it is clear that, in the future, Carmel’s land resources will be even more valuable and scarce and that future development will have to be thought of in ways that have not been the traditional model of growth in the community.

The continued development of a high quality community will be a key point of comparison between Carmel and other cities and towns, and will affect our ability to continue as an attractive place for business to invest and for people to call home. We can assure ourselves a more livable, vibrant place for people by re-focusing our land use policies and development strategy to emphasize more efficient use of remaining land resources and encourage maximum benefit from infill projects and redevelopment.

What are the goals of the Carmel Urban Design Initiative?

- Raise the level of design understanding among the City of Carmel’s Boards and Commissions relative to land planning, urban design and city building activities. Through this process, community leaders will be better informed on how to draft the plans for its future. Presentations, readings, discussions and field study trips are all a part of this activity.
- Spark debate and enlightened discussion among community leaders about new opportunities for land use planning, urban design and development, and how to re-focus Carmel’s growth in ways that will create great places for people and which will benefit the community for years to come.
- Engagement of the public through lectures on best practices of urban planning and design and through a television piece that focuses on this topic (aired on Carmel Public Access Television in Summer 2005).
- Creation of this “Guiding Principles” document which will assist the City in organizing itself and its long term planning activities. These principles will serve as the basis for the development of a Carmel Central Business District plan, as well as the basis of a future rethinking of the City of Carmel’s Comprehensive Plan, which was last drafted in 1996.

The Central Core of Carmel, Indiana





CIVIC DESIGN

What is this document’s purpose?

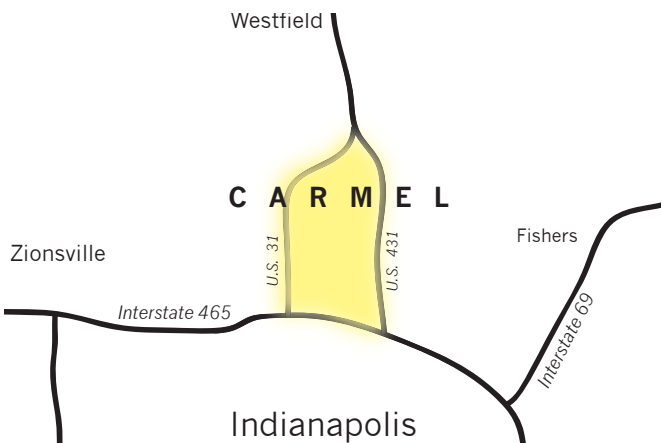
This document establishes and explains six key principles of civic design and land development for the future of the Central Core Area in the city of Carmel, Indiana. The purpose of these principles is to provide guiding attitudes in the areas of land use, urban design and city planning as Carmel evolves from a traditional suburb to a well-designed, comfortable city. Each principle contains an identification of issues and general recommendations for the future, all of which are intended to spark discussion and debate. It is this discussion and debate that will make this document a living thing, guiding the attitudes of the planning process in the Central Core for years to come. The critical review of this document will lead to a healthy community interaction, which produces informed decision making, and ultimately, a higher quality of life for the people of Carmel.

THE PRINCIPLES:

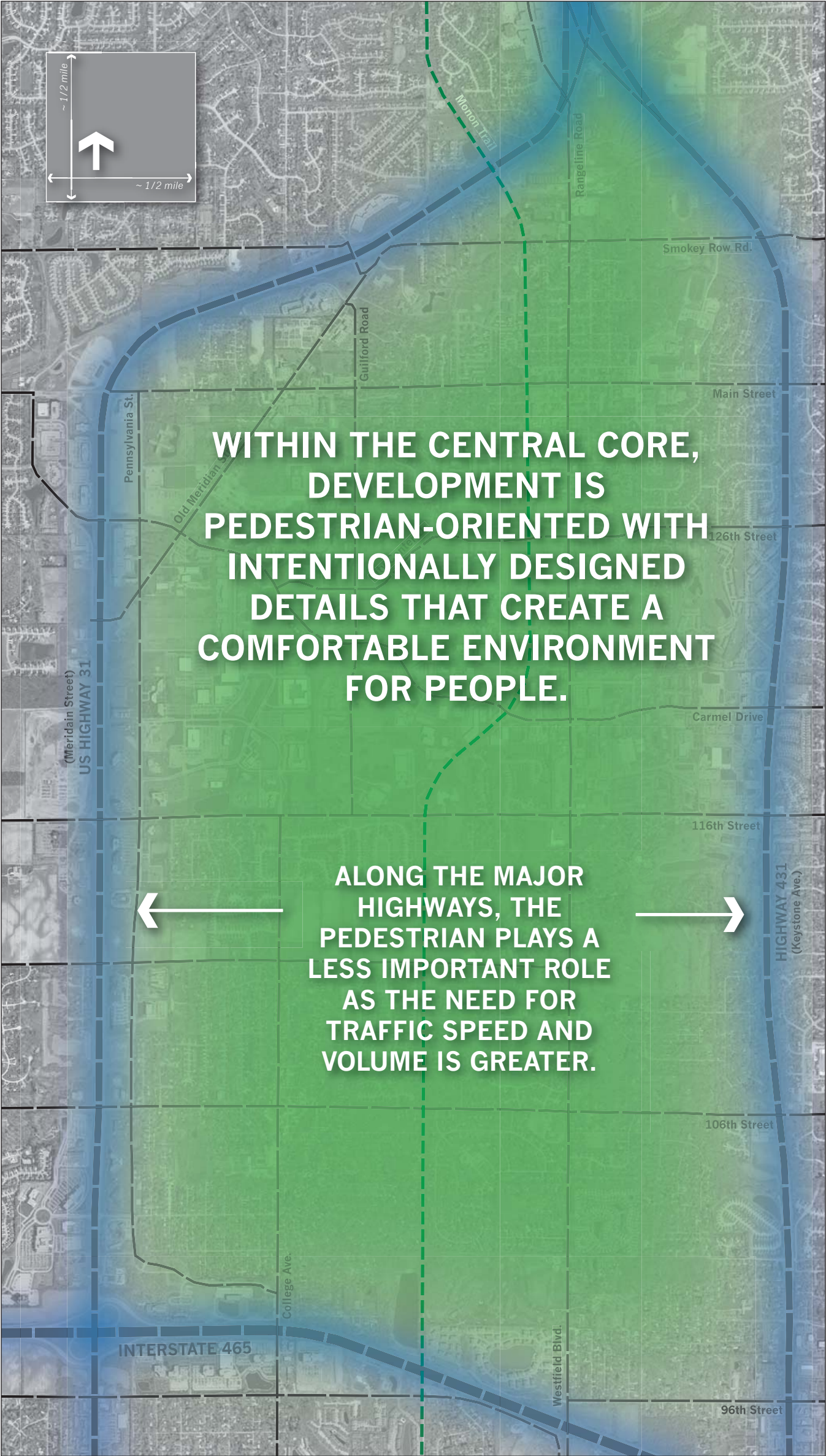
1. *A Comfortable City* (p.9)
2. *An Interesting City* (p.11)
3. *A City of Neighborhoods* (p.13)
4. *A Mobile City* (p.23)
5. *A Healthy City* (p.29)
6. *An Adaptable City* (p.33)

THE CENTRAL CORE

Within this document, a “Central Core” has been identified for planning purposes. This core is defined by major roadway corridors including US 31 & Adjacent Properties (Meridian Street), US 431 (Keystone Avenue) and Interstate 465. Clearly, planning does not stop at these corridors, but rather, they serve as an organizing element for this study. Also, while areas within this area are not all a part of the City of Carmel, all areas are under the planning jurisdiction of the City of Carmel’s Department of Community Services. (DOCS)



A Conceptual Diagram of a Pedestrian-Oriented Core Area



A COMFORTABLE CITY



The Central Core of the City of Carmel is a place where the comforts of people as pedestrians are designed for and celebrated as a vital part of the City's overall quality. People are comfortable in Carmel because there is a mix of diverse people, styles and scales of design, gathering places for socialization, and programming, which generates a vibrant civic life.



For Example...

A Comfortable City has areas of development where people enjoy the scale, variety and size of their surroundings. In addition, they feel comfortable moving from place to place by many modes of transportation including cars, walking, biking and transit. This does not mean that every area must be urban or "dense" rather that areas should be intentionally designed for not just automobile traffic but also pedestrian comfort.

A Comfortable City is one where the interests of people are understood and designed as a part of the basic fabric of the place. This does not mean that cars or convenience should be eliminated. Rather, the health, safety, and comfort of pedestrians are placed as a higher priority than the basic convenience of the automobile.

Building a "comfortable community" is an intentional act, which requires an attitude that "people matter" in the design, building, and redevelopment of cities. The past forty years of suburban design placed emphasis on the convenience of the automobile. Roads were built larger so that cars could get from place to place faster. Buildings were moved away from sidewalks so that cars could pull in and out quickly. Sprawling development was able to occur because each user had a personal vehicle to bring them to previously untouched parts of the landscape.

ISSUES

- **Zoning Codes.** Much of Carmel's zoning code language is written to facilitate the automobile's convenience, not the pedestrian's comfort.
- **Education.** While some in the real estate development community see advantages to well-designed development that avoids the problems of sprawl, there still is much education needed. This is also true for elected officials, planning commissions and the general public.

Nantucket, Massachusetts

A comfortable city is a place where chance encounters occur near walkable destinations such as this produce stand, which is a part of the public street.



Photo Credit for both photographs: from "City Comforts" by David Sucher

- **City Comfort "Details".** Modern development seeks efficiency through repetition and mass production. A Comfortable City must seek to include the small details that make a place unique and provide opportunities for individual expression.
- **Roadway Design.** The past forty years of roadway engineering has focused on making cars move more quickly. To achieve a comfortable community, roadway design standards must be revisited to ensure the pedestrian is given top priority.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Form the Comfortable Carmel Committee.** Establish a committee focused on bringing issues of comfort to the forefront of the design and development of Carmel. This would also include educational activities on details of creating a comfortable city.
- **Revisit/Reinvent Zoning in the Central Core.** Current Zoning language and content is cumbersome and difficult to understand. The City should seek to develop a simple zoning system for the Central Core that encourages understanding, is graphical as opposed to verbal in nature and places the pedestrian first. This kind of zoning would seek to use urban design principles to drive development as opposed to the statistics (units per acre) and dimensions (setbacks, etc.) currently used.

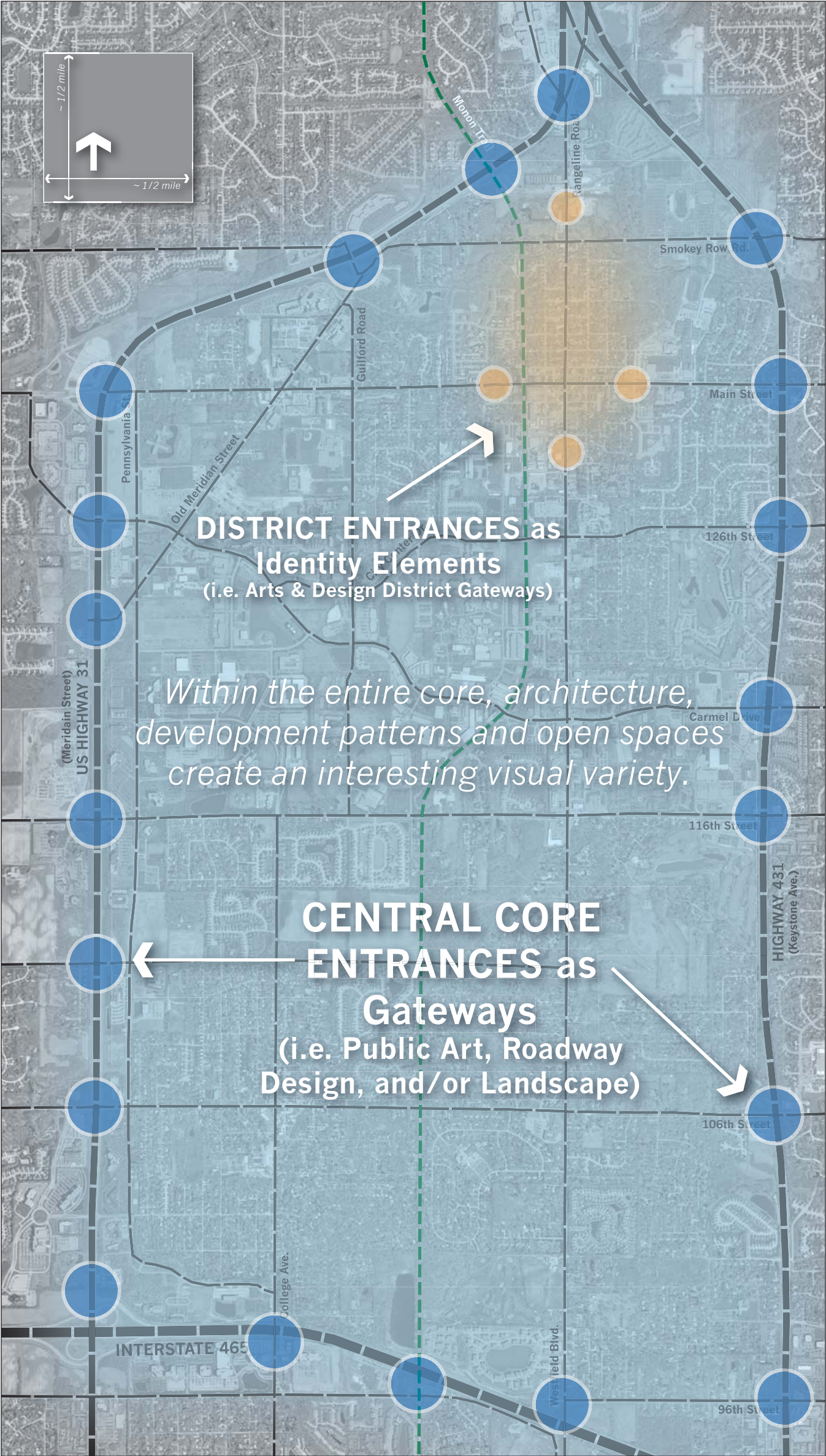
RESOURCES

- **BOOK:** "City Comforts" by David Sucher
- **WEB:** www.walkablecommunities.org
- **WEB:** www.municode.com (an example zoning code)
- **VIDEO:** "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces" by W. Whyte

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Comfort occurs in a City when residents have options for housing, shopping, working and moving around and each option is understood and designed.

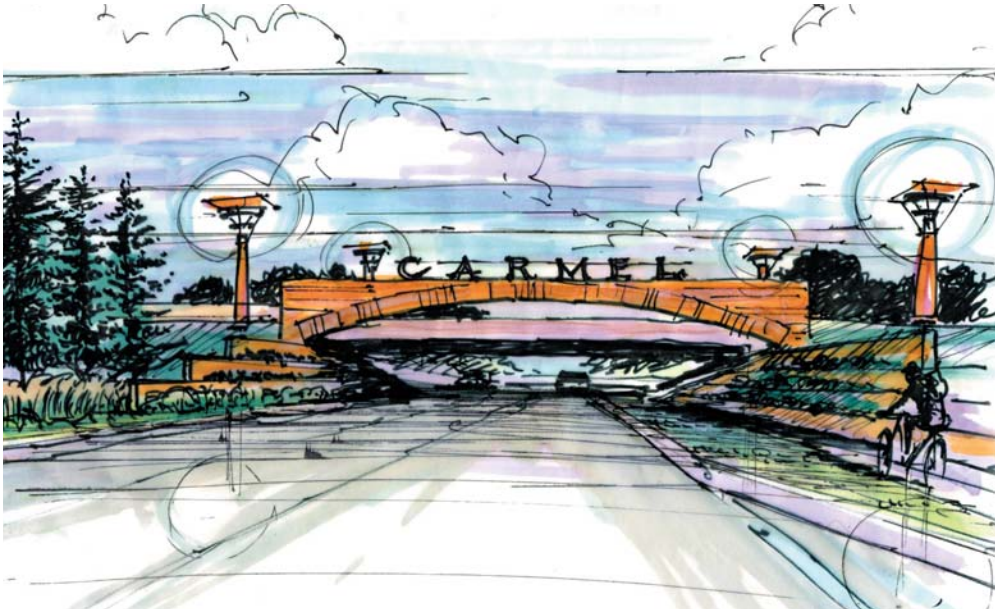




AN INTERESTING CITY



The Central Core is a place recognized as being rich in human interest and possessing a spectrum of cultural outlets, interesting architecture, public arts, and dynamic spaces for the people of Carmel and visitors alike. When people enter the Central Core, they know that they are entering a place of uniqueness, comfort, and quality.



For Example...

Gateways create interest for residents and visitors alike and start to build an identity, which leads to a sense of community and place.



With the rise of national corporations, mass produced development, and “efficient” roadway design, cities and towns have lost much of the identity, which gave their residents a sense of pride and place. It was also this same identity that made a city an attractive place to visit.

An Interesting City is one where residents and visitors alike know they are in a special and unique place by the quality of visual experience and the size and variety of buildings and landscape. Tools to enhance these qualities include the introduction of public art (both objects and spaces), a rich variety of architectural styles (traditional and modern), and a celebration of a variety of cultures and their expression (economic and ethnic cultures).

ISSUES

- **Identity and Gateway.** Current arrival into the Central Core of Carmel is a non-descript experience for residents and visitors due to the lack of public art, visual excitement and development pattern uniqueness.
- **Architecture.** Currently, the City of Carmel has many buildings that have historical architectural styles, such as the Georgian style. While the use of traditional architecture styles invokes feelings of “the good ol’ days”, its sole use ultimately leads to a visual character more similar to a museum rather than an active, dynamic city. The use of varied architectural styles and materials is critical to create a unique and interesting city.

Bloomington, Indiana

Cities with identity use small details such as this street sign to give information to the community, along with a sense of design and style.



- **Large Developments without Interest.** Replacation of similar architectual styles, building designs and colors creates efficiency in construction costs and generally better development profit potential. However, this practice also creates visually boring developments that cities must live with for years to come.
- **Signage and Wayfinding.** Currently, there is no clear signage and wayfinding system in the City. Clear wayfinding and interesting signage create a visual and logistical experience that improves overall quality of life and gives a City identity.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Form the Interesting Carmel Committee.** Establish a committee focused on providing assistance with public art commissioning, architectural variation, public space design, and the overall signage and wayfinding systems.
- **Establish the Carmel Wayfinding and Signage Master Plan.** This planning effort should seek to meld the goals of logistics and ease of use with the need for community identity. There is also an opportunity for economic development through the marketing of this identity.
- **Encourage Small, Well- Designed Developments.** The City should also seek opportunities to encourage small development ventures to add interest and variety to the build environment.

RESOURCES

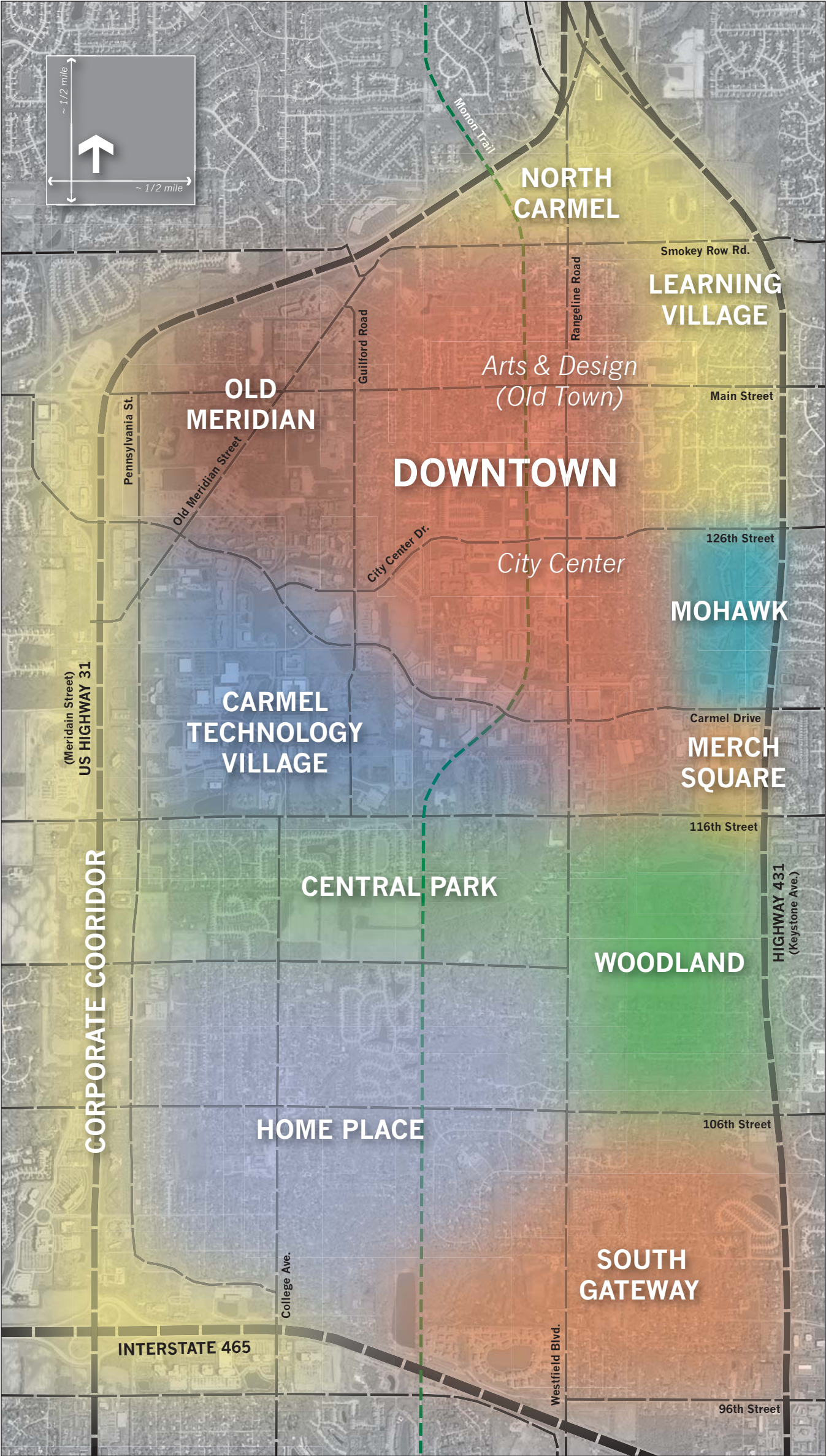
- **BOOK:** “Cities and the Creative Class” by Richard Florida
- **WEB:** www.artsjournal.com & www.indyarts.org
- **WEB:** www.uli.org (The Urban Land Institute)

Washington, District of Columbia

This new development project uses different materials (brick, stucco, wood) and different colors to create a visually interesting architectural style.



Possible Neighborhoods of the Carmel Central Core



A CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS



The Central Core of Carmel is not just a collection of individual subdivisions with little connection to the fabric of the community and lacking the interest and amenity a variety of land uses brings. Rather, the Core is home to true neighborhoods with interesting identities, a comfortable mix of housing types, walkable centers and gathering spaces, neighborhood schools, and logical naming. All of this tied into the community's overall network of paths/trails, community open space and transit.

After World War II, suburban development sought to bring people out of the “congested, dirty cities” and give them housing on large lots in the pastoral setting of curvy street subdivisions. This approach has led to the creation of numerous subdivisions throughout the City of Carmel, which many refer to as “neighborhoods.” While achieving its goal of moving people out of urban settings, this suburban approach also eliminated many of the development patterns that make great communities including: a mix of housing types, neighborhood serving commercial services, an associated mix of age groups, proximity to neighbors, and short commutes.

A **City of Neighborhoods** is one where neighborhoods are defined by having a “kit of parts,” their own identity and their ability to allow the life cycle to occur (Living options for all ages from youth to families to seniors). Each neighborhood should have “parts,” which include a mix of housing types at various price points, commercial and retail services, accessibility to other areas through transit, a connected roadway network, and an identity for residents and visitors to understand and celebrate.

ISSUES

- **Mix of Land Uses and Building Types.** Most subdivisions were created as mono-use districts (one type of housing; i.e. single family) because past planning practices said that single use zones

Columbus, Ohio - German Village

Some neighborhood districts have ethnic or historical underpinnings, such as German Village in Columbus, where ethnic symbols give a sense of character.



New York, New York - Central Park

Public open space or parks can be defining features of a neighborhood district with a quintessential example of Central Park New York.



were preferable and they had building efficiencies that made development more profitable. This practice, however, also created communities where there was little diversity in people and style.

- **Neighborhood Identity.** Current neighborhood organizations are based on subdivisions in the City of Carmel. Future organizations should look to connect several subdivisions, along with new development, to create true neighborhoods.
- **Connectivity.** Past development practice was to disconnect subdivisions to achieve privacy. In doing this, the development pattern also eliminated many of the land use planning practices that are widely regarded as improving the climate for “community,” such as streets as social spaces, density, public open space, proximity, and connectivity to neighbors.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Establish a Carmel Neighborhoods Committee and Map.** While it might require much discussion, a map of potential neighborhoods should be released for discussion. Workshops should then follow for refinement and organization of these areas.
- **Develop Neighborhood Plans.** Each neighborhood should have its own future planning to define its character and development. These plans should be based on the principles of this document.
- **Schools and Education.** As population and growth continues, the opportunity for schools to be integrated into neighborhoods presents a chance to create identity and community.

RESOURCES

- **BOOK:** “Neighborhood Planning” by Bernie Jones (APA)
- **WEB:** www.neighborhoodplanning.org

Indianapolis, Indiana - Monument Circle

Monuments or other dramatic pieces of public design often create an identity for a neighborhood or district, such as in Indianapolis around the circle.



Sedona, Arizona - Arts Village

The identity of a neighborhood district around a profession is also a common way to build character, as is the case in Sedona, with the use of arts & crafts.



CURRENT Nodes of Density and Mixed-Land Uses



A CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS:

Current Nodes of Density and Mixed Land-Use



No community desires to be a place where walking is not possible and people have no focal point for gathering. However, development patterns of the last 50 years have created places where people have not had the option for walking and development has been so spread out that there is not the critical mass (or market) of people required for walkable services (i.e. corner store, florist). While recreational walking has been a focus of the development of the Monon Trail, utilitarian walking is a function of land use, density and the availability of these “walkable services.” A quarter (1/4) mile is typically regarded as the standard distance someone will walk for a utilitarian trip (i.e. getting a gallon of milk, walking to the coffee shop). A “Node,” therefore, is a place where there is density, vertically mixed-land uses and a focus of people activity. The City of Carmel, as a traditional suburb, has had few of these “nodes,” despite recent beginnings at Old Meridian and Clay Terrace (Clay Terrace might be regarded as a “Hybrid” Node because a car ride is generally needed to visit and no residential opportunities are available on-site.)

RESOURCES

DENSITY:

- **BOOK:** “Density by Design” by Steven Fader (ULI)
- **WEB:** www.uli.org (Case Studies with Development Info)
- **HANDOUT:** “Visualizing Density” by McLean & Campoli (Available in Carmel DOCS Offices)
- **HANDOUT:** “Higher Density Development” by Richard Haughey (Myth and Fact Booklet; www.uli.org)

PARKING/TRANSIT:

- **BOOK:** “The High Cost of Free Parking” by Donald C. Shoup (American Planning Association)
- **BOOK:** “Shared Parking” by Mary Smith, et al. (ULI)
- **WEB:** www.ite.org (Institute of Transportation Engineers)
- **BOOK:** “Asphalt Nation” by Jane Holtz Kay
- **VIDEO:** “Taken for a Ride” PBS Video

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT:

- **BOOK:** “The New Civic Art” by Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Alminana
- **BOOK:** “Place Making” by Charles Bohl (ULI)
- **WEB:** www.cnu.org (The Congress for New Urbanism)
- **WEB:** www.theseasideinstitute.org

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT:

- **BOOK:** “Community By Design” by Hall and Poterfield
- **BOOK:** “Mixed-Use Development Handbook” by Dean Schwanke, et al. (ULI)
- **HANDOUT:** “Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail” by Beyard, Paulukiewicz, Bond (ULI)
- **WEB:** www.uli.org (The Urban Land Institute)

Old Town (Arts & Design District)

Old Town Main Street has a history of being a node of density and mixed-land use. New development, seen to the right, has also followed this history.



City Center

Although more development is planned, City Center Carmel currently is home to a mix of housing types and office buildings.



Old Meridian

A new node is developing along Old Meridian Street where the combination of townhomes, apartments and commercial/retail uses are being built.

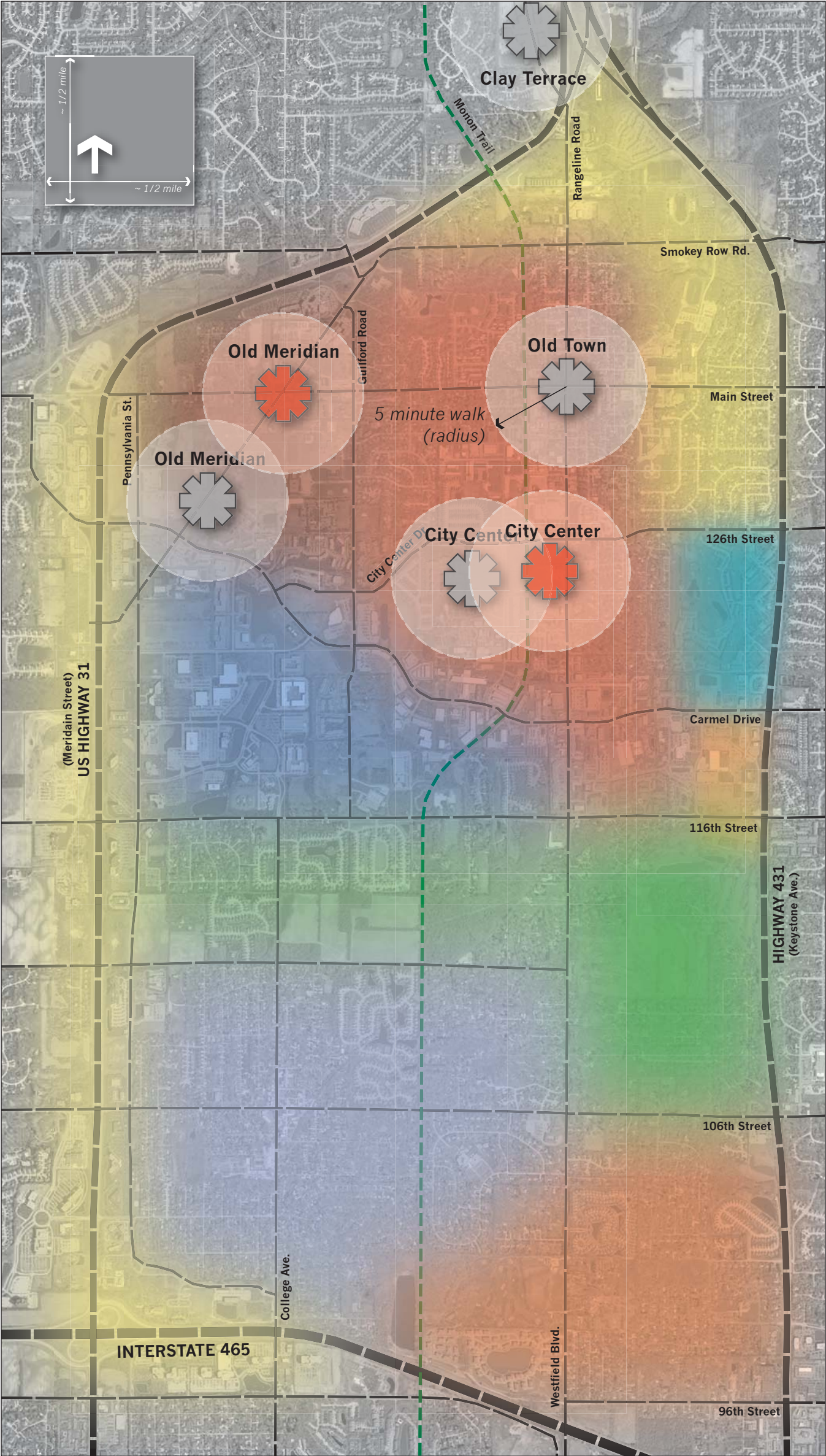


Clay Terrace

While still mostly requiring a car for access, Clay Terrace does act as a node for a dense grouping of retail and office opportunities.

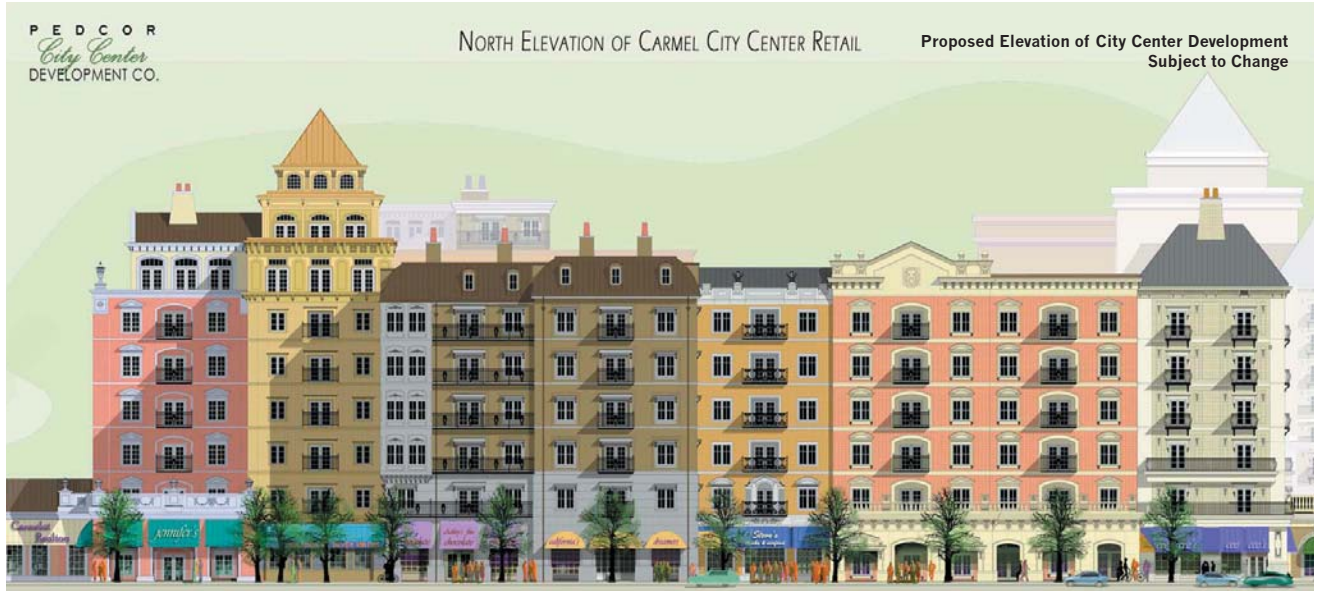


PLANNED Nodes of Density and Mixed-Land Uses



A CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS:

Planned Nodes of Density and Mixed Land-Use

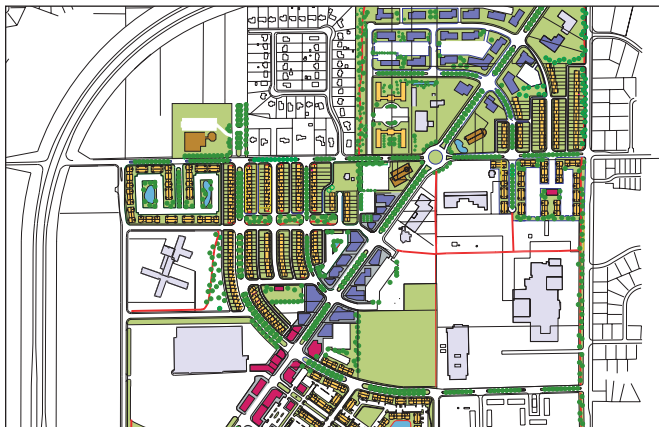


ISSUES

- **Public Acceptance.** One of the greatest issues that the return to walkable neighborhood centers faces is that of public understanding and acceptance. Because we have not developed in this manner for decades, many of the principles of this kind of development are foreign and not readily understood.
- **Density.** For years the term “Density” has referred to a quantitative number that is representative of how “congested” a new development might be in the future. In the case of the neighborhood center model discussed here, density is less important than quality design in creating new development areas.
- **Vision.** Initial building of these areas will create the beginnings of new nodes in Carmel. However, it is critical that adjacent lands also be designed to enhance the character of these places in the long term.

Old Meridian Street Overlay

Areas such as the Old Meridian Street overlay zone have conceptual development plans in place to help guide future development activities.



Performing Arts Center

The future performing arts center is an opportunity to bring cultural amenities to the area and will be a part of the City Center Development.



Images courtesy of the City of Carmel: Artist's Conceptual Renderings

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Use these Nodes as an Economic Development Tool.** The implementation of these nodes will provide examples of a progressive community with a sense of place. This quality of life factor should be exploited in the recruitment and retaining of businesses to the Carmel area.
- **Share Development Education.** Carmel has the opportunity to not only improve the quality of life for residents in the City of Carmel, but also those in the greater Central Indiana area and beyond. As these developments become reality they begin to serve as educational field study opportunities for the development community. It is critical that Carmel share its redevelopment story as a showcase and learning opportunity.

Offering Interesting Programming in Neighborhoods

As development occurs, it is key to continue to involve activities such as farmer's markets to give neighborhoods interesting programming.

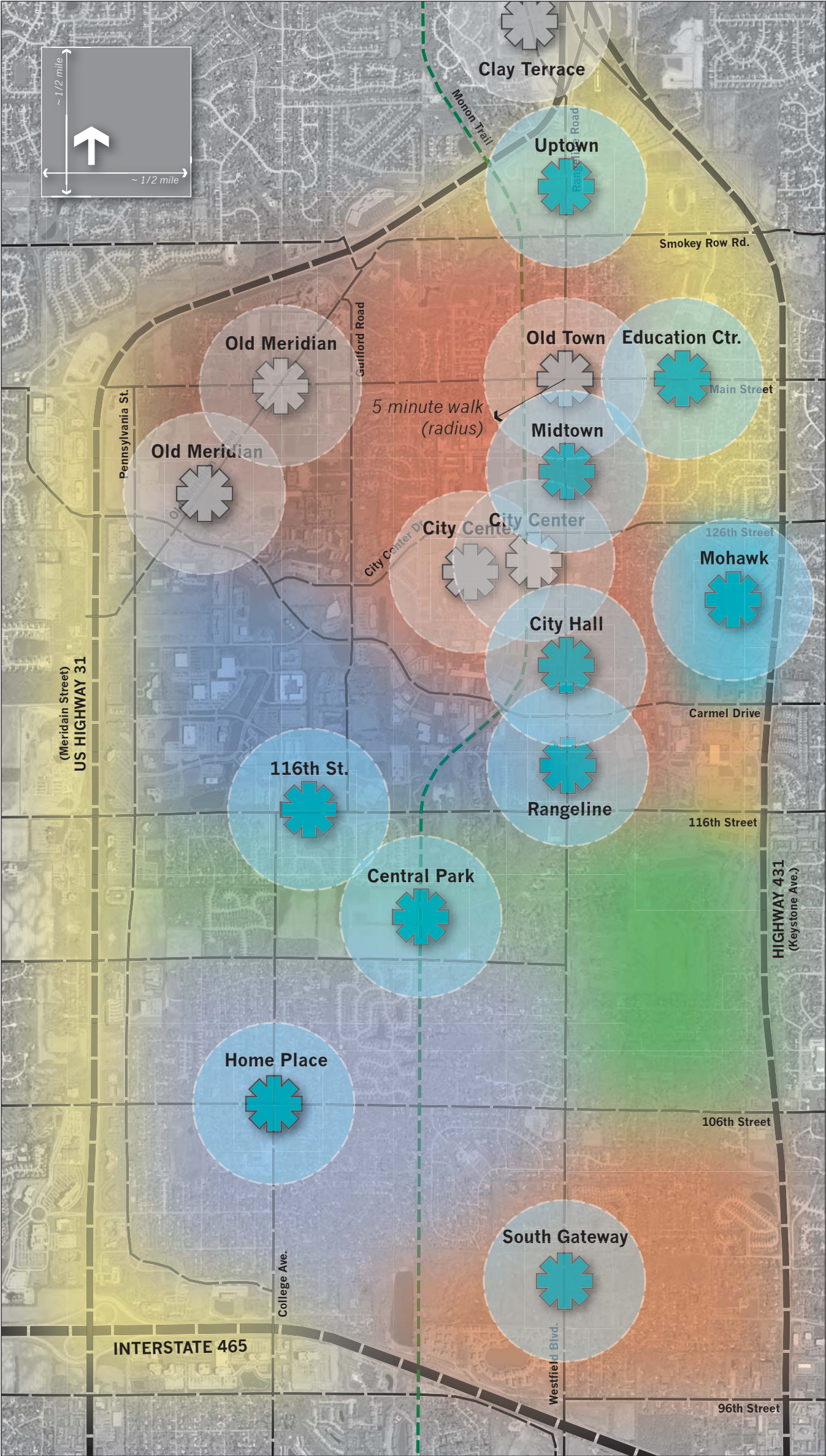


Live/Work Options

As nodes develop, there will be opportunities for the live (upper floors)/work (1st floor) model to be implemented as the example below showcases.



Possible FUTURE Nodes of Density and Mixed-Land Uses



A CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS:

Possible Future Nodes of Density and Mixed Land-Use



For Example...

Future nodes of development should be comfortable places to live, work and play. A variety of architectural styles, natural features and mobility options can all combine to create dynamic spaces.

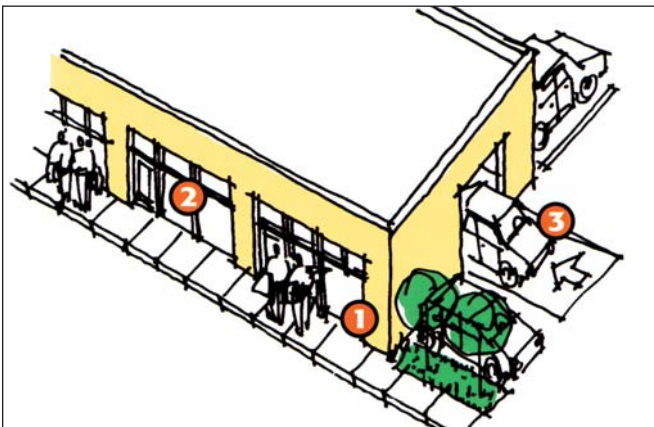


ISSUES

- **The Life Cycle of Living in a Neighborhood.** Without a mix of land uses and housing types within a neighborhood district, residents who would like to live in the same community for their lifetime face a nearly impossible scenario. Seniors are forced to move away from established social networks when the time to downsize their homes occurs or needs for assisted living develop. Youth are barred entry into the community due to affordability issues. And all residents without a automobile (seniors, children, etc.) are disadvantaged by not having the option to walk for basic services (i.e. grocery, retail, schools, park).
- **Affordability.** There is an affordable housing need for residents who cannot afford expensive single family housing. Often these residents include those who provide the essential services such as teachers, government professionals, and service staff.

David Sucher's Three Rules of Urban Design

In the book "City Comforts" author David Sucher outlines three basic rules for quality urban design and creating walkable commercial communities.



2. Make the Building Front "Permeable"

Connect the inside of the building and the sidewalk outside with usable windows and doors. Sub-Rule: Prohibit mirrored glass to block visibility.



"Three Rules" Credit: from "City Comforts" by David Sucher

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Encourage Real Estate Development Joint Ventures.** The City of Carmel should encourage real estate developers who have a narrow practice focus (i.e. only single family homes) to joint venture or team with other developers who bring other development skills (retail, commercial, multi-family) to development or redevelopment opportunities to create mixed-use.
- **Create a "Kit of Parts" Checklist for Neighborhood Nodes.** Each neighborhood in Carmel should have access to a basic "kit of parts" of land uses and services. The City should work to establish a basic checklist of items that each node requires. Checklist items might include, but not limited to:
 - A Mix of Housing Types and Densities
 - Retail Services such as dry cleaning, coffee shops, etc.
 - Open Space access by walking (5 min or less)

1. Build to the Sidewalk

Create a strong streetwall in which each building meets or comes close to the sidewalk. Sub-Rule: Locate the inside floor level close to the sidewalk level.

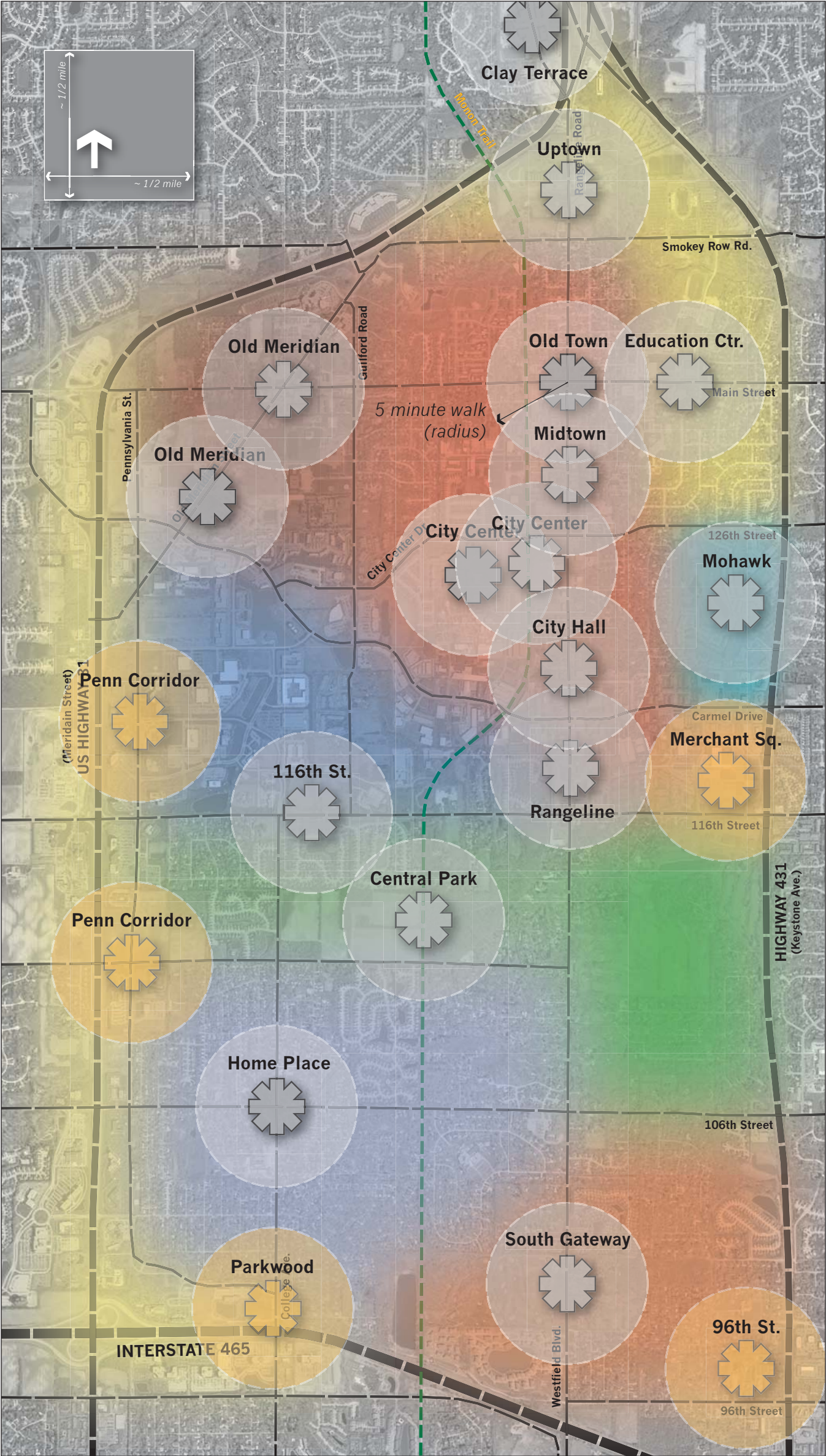


3. Prohibit Parking Lots in the Front of the Building

Put on-site parking above, below, behind, or beside. Sub-Rule: Allow on-street parking. Stop-and-go parking is essential to real shopping districts.



“HYBRID” Nodes of Density and Mixed-Land Uses



A CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS:

“Hybrid” Nodes of Density and Mixed Land-Use



For Example...

Hybrid nodes of activity should be places where the needs of travelers from other cities and areas are accommodated in conjunction with the comfort of those who live and work at the point of destination.



ISSUES

- **Daily Population Centers.** The US 31 and 431 (Meridian & Keystone) corridors are significant daily population centers as residents and visitors come to these areas for employment and services. Yet, because of the automobile dominated design and “spread out” nature of these areas, there are few opportunities for car-less travel to everyday retail, commercial and housing needs.
- **Transit Hub.** Because of the large daily population, these areas provide the most potential for large-scale transit benefit, both inter-urban (i.e. between Carmel and Indianapolis) and intra-urban (i.e from Old Town to the Pennsylvania Street Corridor)
- **Land Values vs. Parking.** As land values increase, the ability to create large parking lot areas is diminished. As development continues, techniques for handling parking must be addressed.

Wheaton, Illinois

Parking garages can be more than just parking buildings. In this example, a parking garage is faced with condominium apartment units.



General Street Section with Transit

Even large streets can accommodate and make transit a comfortable and viable option for places where a high density of buildings does not exist.



Photo Credit: www.pedbikeimages.org; Dan Burden

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Encourage Structured Parking as more than Parking.** Parking garage structures can be used for more than just parking. Housing, retail and other uses have been integrated into structured parking areas as ways of creating a mix of uses, variety of architecture and providing small-scale retail services.
- **Design for Mobility.** As new buildings are created in these areas, they should be designed with mobility issues in mind. Opportunities include:
 - Facilities to assist in the walking, running or biking to work by employees. These include changing and shower facilities in addition to bike racks or lockers.
 - Including space for basic retail services (food outlets, etc.) to reduce the need for marginal trips from the facilities via car.
 - Transit shelters and accessibility for disabled users from transit to buildings.

Santa Barbara, California

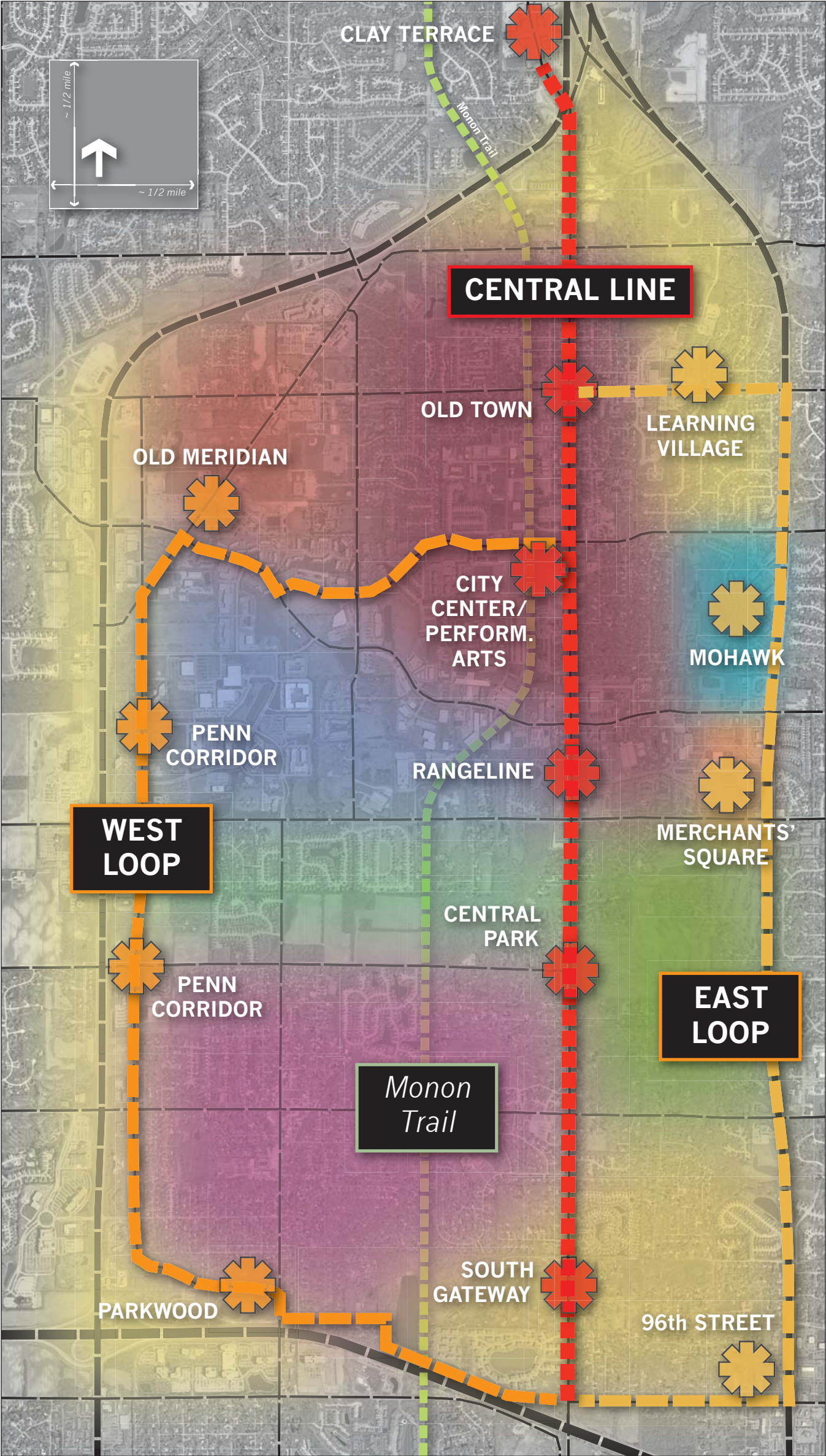
Implementing a shuttle system to key nodes of activity (using Indiana Soy Diesel or alternative fuel) could help reduce marginal road traffic.



Bike to Work

As buildings begin to offer facilities (i.e. shower, bike storage) more people will have the opportunity to ride to work occasionally instead of using a car.





A MOBILE CITY: TRANSIT



The Central Core of Carmel is a place where a resident or visitor can be truly mobile through a choice of mobility options including bicycles, walking, automobiles, the internet, and transit services. Specifically, the transit component of the system will be an accessible, clean, and efficient option connecting key nodes in the community.



For Example...

Transit must exist as a designed part of a community, not just a service. Integration into the systems of mobility and urban design is a key to long term success of transit systems.



In the early development of our cities, residents and visitors were mobile in their communities with a variety of transportation “tools.” Public transit, walking, bicycles, buses, automobiles, and taxicabs were all a part of a “tool kit” of mobility and were readily available. Today, cars dominate our communities and our land use patterns allowing for few, if any, other transportation options.

A Mobile City recognizes the need for a transit system to provide efficiency in transportation, land use development, and environmental well-being. By having pride and designing such a system, the City offers residents and visitors a quality of life enhancement with many benefits, both direct and indirect. And this transit system should be seen as one of the tools that should be offered.

ISSUES

- **Auto Dependence Designed into Land Use.** Yes, the public enjoys driving. However, the public often has few other options for mobility. Past land use patterns and site planning have given complete control of our built environment to those getting from place to place via automobile.
- **Health and Air Quality.** There is a proven correlation between our health and our land use patterns. Communities have a greater opportunity to be healthy when there are transit systems in place because they encourage walking and bicycle usage to get to transit stations. They also have better air quality because

fewer cars are on the road. This is a critical issue because the Central Indiana region is currently in danger of losing federal funding based on poor air quality.

- **Commuting.** Increasingly, those who live in Carmel, yet work miles away, are seeing their commute times increase. This increase has ripple effects through the community by reducing the disposable time for residents to be with family and contribute to the overall civic well-being of the community.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Form the Mobile Carmel Committee.** Establish a committee focused on providing coordination with regional transit, research and development of a IntraUrban system and creation of other mobility opportunities.
- **InterUrban Central Indiana Transportation.** Central Indiana is currently studying options for mass transit. As the study continues, the City of Carmel must seek opportunities to connect into the proposed system.
- **IntraUrban Carmel Transit System.** Regardless of how the Central Indiana Transportation system evolves, the City of Carmel must act quickly to develop an Intra-Carmel transit system to give its growing population options for mobility. This system might include light rail, dedicated bus (soy diesel or other clean fuel), or trolley.

RESOURCES

- **BOOK:** “Urban Transportation Systems” by Sigurd Grava
- **WEB:** www.railvolution.org & www.indygov.org/indympo

Portland, Oregon

While developing the ridership for light-rail might be years away, there still needs to be a commitment today to seek the undisputable benefits of transit.



Photo Credit: www.pedbikeimages.org; Dan Burden

Buses and Bikes

A true multi-modal transit system allows pedestrian powered modes of mobility (bike, walking) to interact seamlessly with buses and light rail systems.



Roadways as Walking, Biking and Driving Corridors



A MOBILE CITY: CORRIDORS

Street Corridors for More than just Automobiles



For Example...

The car is essential to our lives. However, it does not need to dominate our built environment. Multi-Modal streets are those where people are comfortable both inside and outside of the car.



ISSUES

- **Streets for More than Just Cars.** Pedestrian trails such as the Monon have invoked discussions about where we can find large rights-of-way that can be turned into pedestrian trail systems. Fortunately, we have hundreds of miles of those kinds of rights-of-way in our existing roadway systems. Our streets connect our population centers, crisscross our communities and can be designed for more than just automobile traffic.
- **Mobility for all People.** Only a portion of the population is mobile through the use of automobiles. Infants, children, youth, the disabled and the elderly all rely on others for transportation when no other options are available. By offering other transit options communities reduce the marginal trips required to take these under served populations to and from destinations that might have been otherwise reached via walking, biking or transit.

Tallahassee, Florida

Drivers, bicyclists and walkers/runners can all co-exist on street systems when each group understands and respects each other.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Roadway Design as Multi-Modal Design.** Civil and Transportation Engineers are beginning to understand the value of multi-modal design. Carmel has the opportunity to mandate and design all its major roadways as multi-modal mobility corridors.
- **Marketing of Multi-Modal Options.** Breaking the dependence on automobiles will only be possible with education of options to the general public including benefits that might not normally be understood, such as health benefits and gas savings.

RESOURCES

- **BOOK:** "Great Streets" by Allan Jacobs
- **WEB:** www.walkablecommunities.org
- **BOOK:** "Creating Walkable Places" by Adrienne Schmitz

Boulder, Colorado

Signage and clear design make multi-modal corridors a possibility and eliminate uncertainty that leads to accidents and sub-optimal usage.



Davis, California

Trail systems can be a part of the urban fabric just as much as a sidewalk. In this example, the bike users are buffered from both cars and the sidewalk.

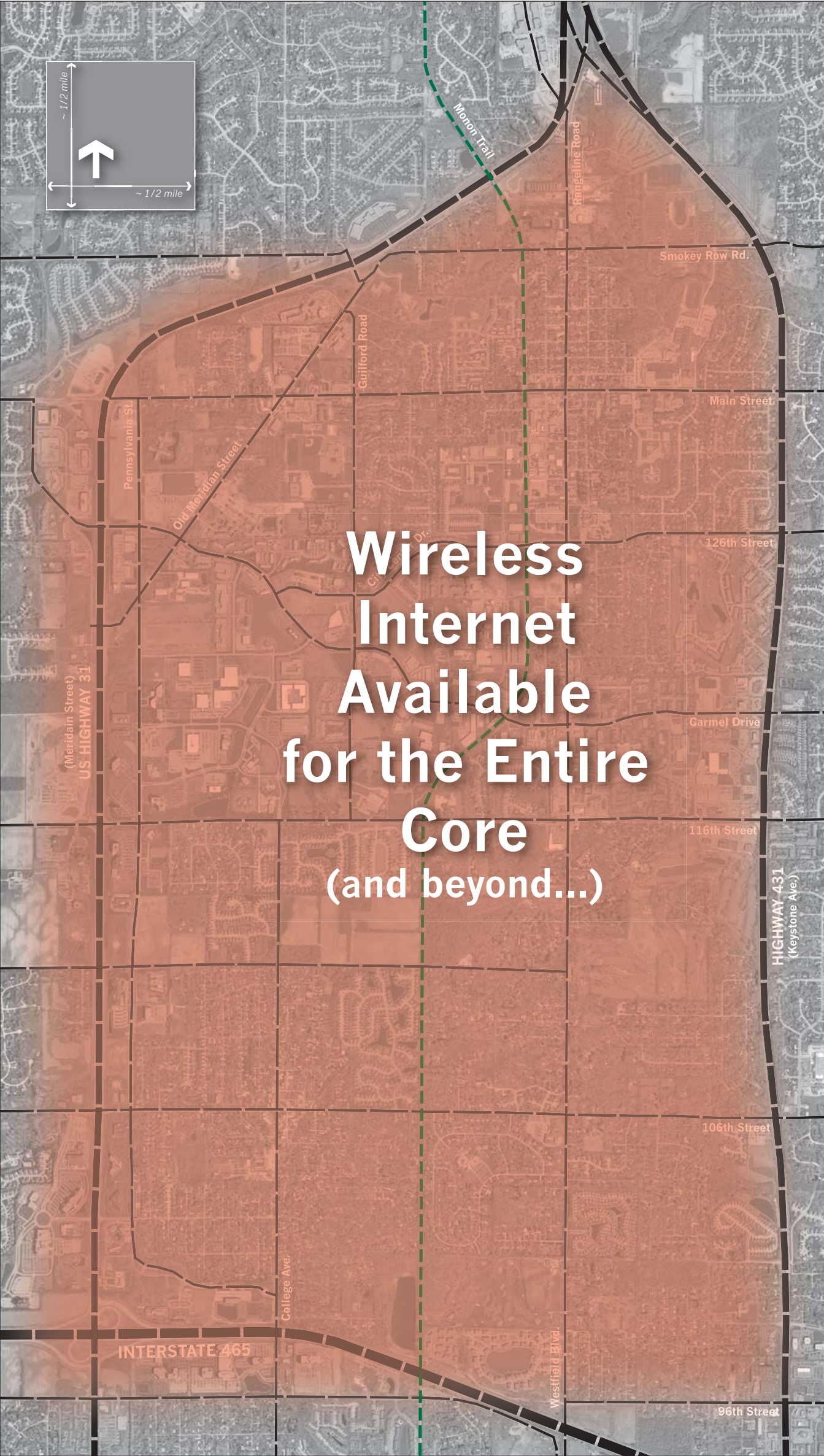


Photo Credit: www.pedbikeimages.org; Dan Burden

Cambridge, Massachusetts

To encourage walking, attention must be paid to the walking zone. Below, trees, bollards, seats and wide sidewalk make a pleasant walking experience.





A MOBILE CITY: INTERNET

Creating a Wireless Internet Zone for Mobility



For Example...

Mobility can include the use of technology such as the internet. This technology offers the opportunity to communicate in effective ways and opens a world of information. The Internet creates opportunities for the new design of mobility in our communities.

The internet has changed our world. Information of all kinds is only a click or two away through a personal computer. Because of this fact, our communities are changing. We are working differently and sharing communication differently. Working at home is a reality and socialization often occurs over a computer screen. While this trend has possible negative effects (i.e. lack of face to face contact, socializing issues, identity theft) there are as many positive effects. Regardless, our cities must plan for the internet and its role in the design of places.

The proposed wireless internet zone would send a “signal” to residents, visitors and businesses. It says, “Carmel is a place where you have options for mobility and one of those options is the internet.”

ISSUES

- **Economic Development.** It is clear that the internet is a critical component for communications in a community. Emails, files and information are exchanged each second. As this resource becomes an even greater part of each person's life, the City's commitment to technology to enhance the digital experience will be a strategic advantage for economic development opportunities.
- **Private Internet Providers.** The distribution of wireless internet is becoming an issue with the private telecommunications industry because the service is often offered by the City at a lower cost. Many states have passed laws that restrict cities from implementing wireless networks, but these issues are not resolved.
- **Flexibility.** Although it is impossible to look into the future of technology with an entirely clear view, steps should be taken to build flexibility into a system to adapt to changes and technology.

Working Remotely

Wireless internet services present users with options to work on internet activities from a variety of locations, such as this sidewalk cafe.



CURRENT TECHNOLOGY

- **802.11a.** Most computers have equipment to run on the 802.11b or 802.11g systems. However, this technology runs on the very “crowded” frequency of 2.4 GHz (think cordless phones). The 802.11a system runs on the much more open 5.8GHz frequency which is faster and allows for larger information distribution.
- **WiMAX.** WiMax (Worldwide Interoperability Microwave Access) is a system that was created to send large amounts of data over long distances. These signals can send information from 3 to 10 miles depending on building and vegetation density. This technology will begin to surface in American communities in 2005/2006.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Create the Wireless Carmel Committee or Organization.** This organization would be charged with the oversight and implementation of a wireless “world” in Carmel, including understanding of “tower” placement.
- **Develop a Wireless Mobility Handbook.** With the use of the internet many services can be obtained quickly. A wireless mobility handbook would outline trip-saving tips for using city services (i.e. library renewal) and other retail services (i.e. banking). The handbook would also educate about identity security issues and opportunities for socializing through community events.

RESOURCES

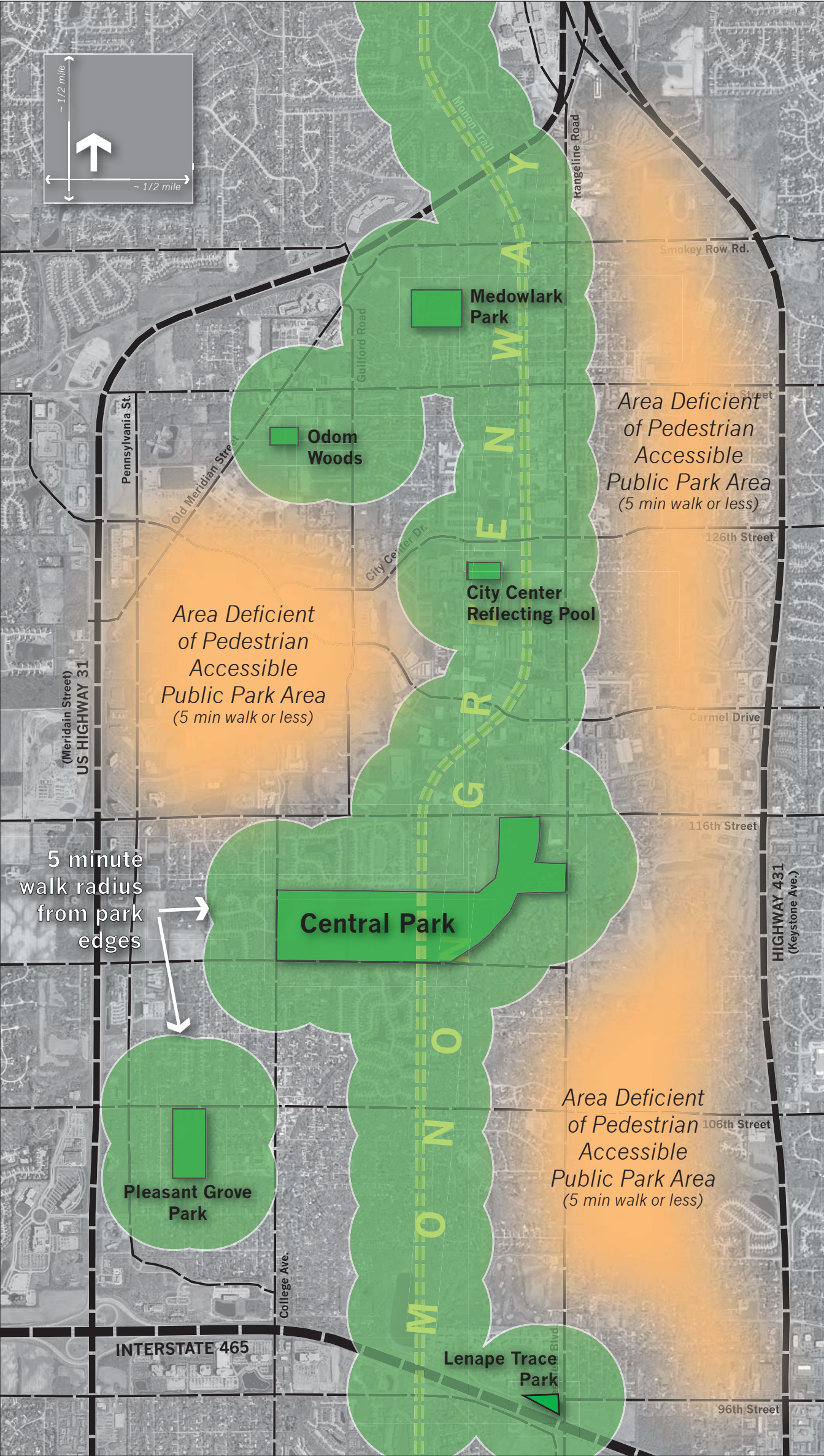
- **WEB:** www.muniwireless.com
- **WEB:** www.mediaaccess.org
- **BOOK:** “Digital Places” by Thomas Horan
- **WEB:** www.3com.com

Cities on the Move

Cities across the world are tackling the issues of wireless internet services. The City of Philadelphia is one of the largest attempting this feat.



Current Accessibility to Public Park Areas



A HEALTHY CITY: PUBLIC ACCESS



The Central Core of the City of Carmel is a place where the general public can safely access public open space, plazas and parks with the option of not driving, through the use of public transit, walking, running, skating and biking. This access insures that all segments of the population (even those without cars) have access including children and seniors.



For Example...

Parks and open spaces must be accessible to all. This means that they are within a comfortable walk of where people live and don't always require a car for transportation.



Parks and open spaces are always designed with the good intentions of use by the public. However, because open space is often not a valued entity in our communities, their design has placed them in remote locations that require extensive automobile transportation to utilize. Residents who used to receive the benefit of walking to open spaces are now required to sit in cars, use gasoline resources and create traffic issues and congestion. And those without access to auto transportation (i.e. children, seniors, low income) are at the schedule and mercy of parents and drivers to get them to their location.

Additionally, these open spaces are designed as isolated areas. With the exception of the Monon Trail, there is little linear connectivity between open spaces. In the future, the issue of connectivity will be a driving force towards encouraging people to get to open spaces without the use of automobiles.

ISSUES

- **Value of Open Space.** Traditionally, open space development within the context of a new development has been nonexistent or in the “undevelopable” areas. This attitude has lead to open spaces which are poorly placed and have undesirable characteristics for their users.
- **Scale of Open Space.** Large park and open space areas provide

many resources for the community, but small intimate open spaces also are needed to provide walkable access and a change of scale from the larger park spaces. Additionally, these small scale open spaces can be designed as a part of development providing walkable access in a short distance.

- **Safety and Common Users.** Open space design must understand the need for safety of children and seniors (the most common users). Therefore, both the open space and the route of access to the space must be designed for safety for these users.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Form the Healthy Carmel Committee.** Establish a committee focused on providing assistance with understanding how health is a part of our land use and open space decisions. This committee should have representation from schools and senior community.
- **Demand a “Five Minute Walk for All.”** Begin a process of identifying underserved areas of open space (areas where a public open space is more than a five minute walk away) and seek opportunities for implementing an open space strategy in that area.
- **Utilize the Senior Community as Open Space Rangers.** The senior community offers a resource for acting as eyes and ears for a community’s open spaces and they should be called on to assist in the security of the City’s open space system for children.

RESOURCES

- **BOOK:** “Parks, Recreation, and Open Space” by Alexander Garvin or “Urban Sprawl and Public Health” by Frank/Jackson
- **WEB:** www.pps.org (The Project for Public Spaces)

Houston, Texas

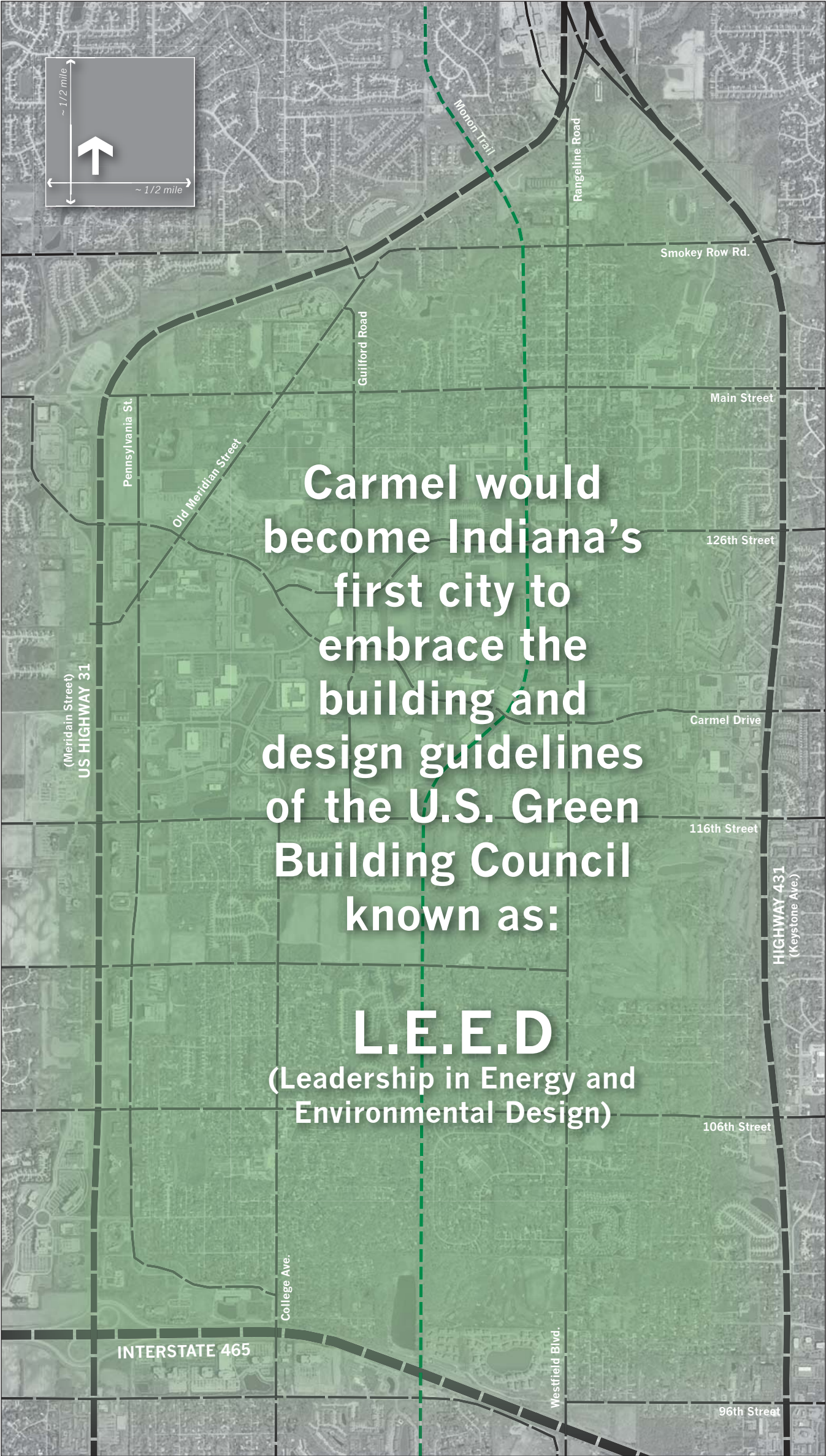
Open spaces must be accessible to a variety of people and ages. In addition, these open spaces must be connected to encourage significant recreation.



Urban Forest and Tree Canopy

A city-wide commitment to an urban forest system has many benefits including energy savings, cooling, air/water/soil quality, and natural beauty.





A HEALTHY CITY: LEED CITY



The City of Carmel knows that its residents and visitors utilize the built environment everyday and that this environment is becoming more important to personal and environmental health. Therefore, Carmel is a place where buildings use less energy, are safer for people, last longer, and are good investments, with a durable life cycle, in the future.



For Example...

Our buildings use massive amounts of energy and are where we spend the majority of our days. The design of buildings should focus on understanding these facts and create places that are healthy, safe, durable and efficient.



When the discussion of environmental issues arises the focus generally turns to the saving of trees or animal wildlife. While critically important to the biodiversity of our communities, this discussion focus is missing a much larger issue: The Health of our Built Environment.

We spend more of our life indoors than outdoors and yet our buildings are not designed in a healthy manner. Issues such as air quality, water pollution, energy efficiency, operation cost and durability have been largely ignored by communities despite their dramatic impact on people. As the use of technologically “advanced” building techniques has emerged, our understanding of basic building science has decreased, leaving us with a unsafe, poorly built and costly built environment.

ISSUES

- **The stigma of “green”.** The environment and those that call themselves “environmentalists” have long had a radical stigma attached to their cause. Detractors have indicated that this cause is out of touch with economics and is not nearly as dire as they might state. While the marketing and activism of “environmentalism” might not have been positive in the past, there is little data to dispute that it is a major issue on which communities must focus in the future.
- **An Attitude of Design and Efficiency.** It is true that small

steps of “green building,” if done only by one, will have a marginal impact on our environment. However, if a city begins to implement these steps and has an attitude that all of the small decisions matter, the cumulative effect is great and dramatic.

- **Building Codes.** The general purposes of building codes are to protect society from poorly built buildings which might harm our safety, health and economic welfare. Yet, what happens when the scientific foundations of many of these codes are flawed or lack an understanding of how to use resources more efficiently?

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Begin the position of “Sustainability Officer.”** Green building and planning decisions require focus and attention. To achieve this, the City must dedicate personnel resources towards staff positions aimed at seeking opportunities for “green” to become “common sense” and “that’s how we do it” attitudes.
- **Become a LEED City.** Working with the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), the City should begin the process of becoming a LEED (system of green building codes) certified city.
- **Set LEED goals.** As a LEED City, new and renovated buildings should strive for a LEED certification as a sign of commitment to the environment. Public buildings should lead by example when the City builds new structures.

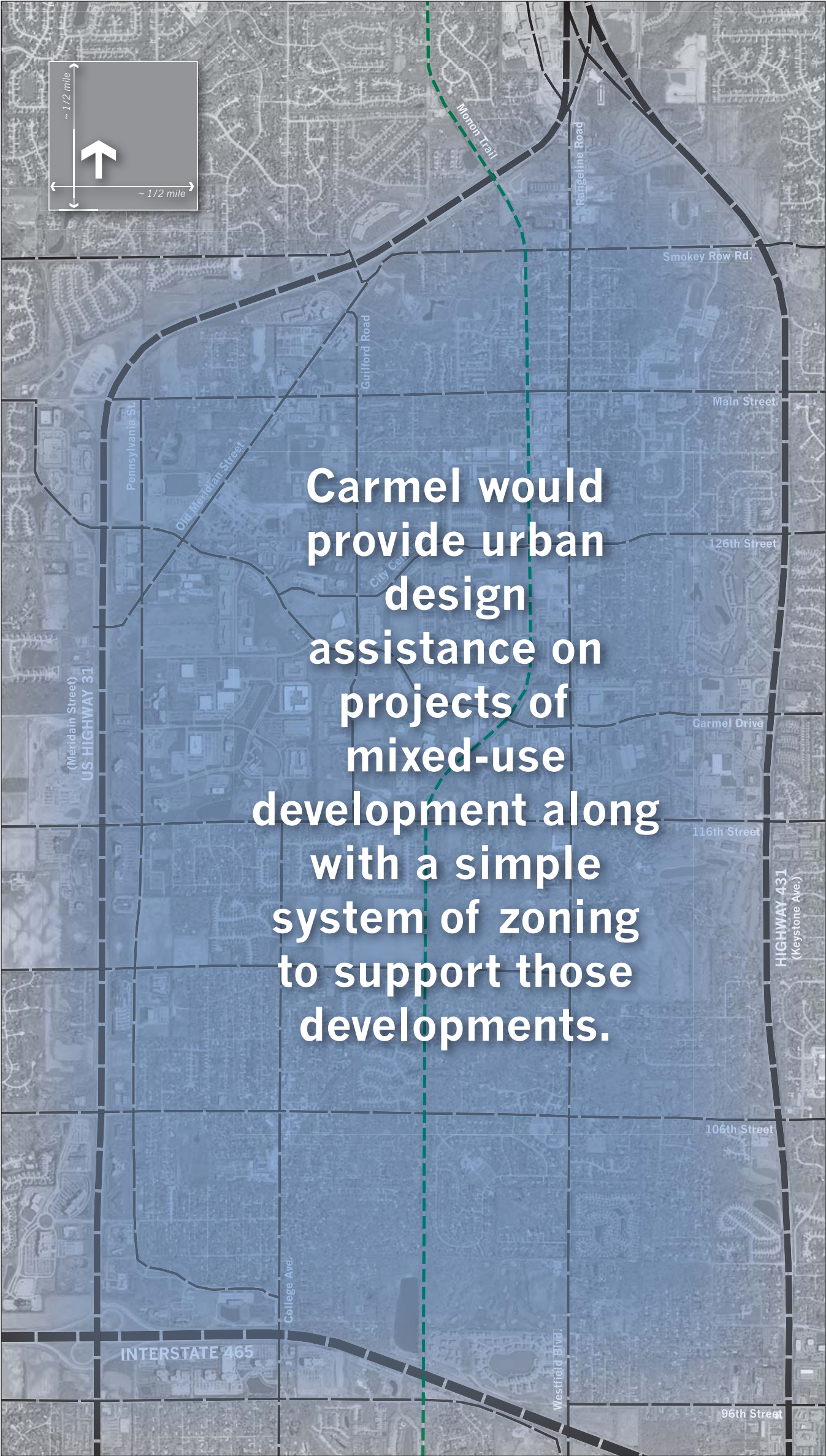
RESOURCES

- **BOOK:** “Nature Friendly Ordinances” by James McElfish
- **WEB:** www.usgbc.org (U.S. Green Building Council)
- **WEB:** www.greenerbuildings.com

Site Design as Green Element

In addition to the mechanical systems of a building, its site design also plays a critical role in the environment. Below, bikes are accommodated, walking is encouraged, a historic building is reused and vegetation collects storm water.

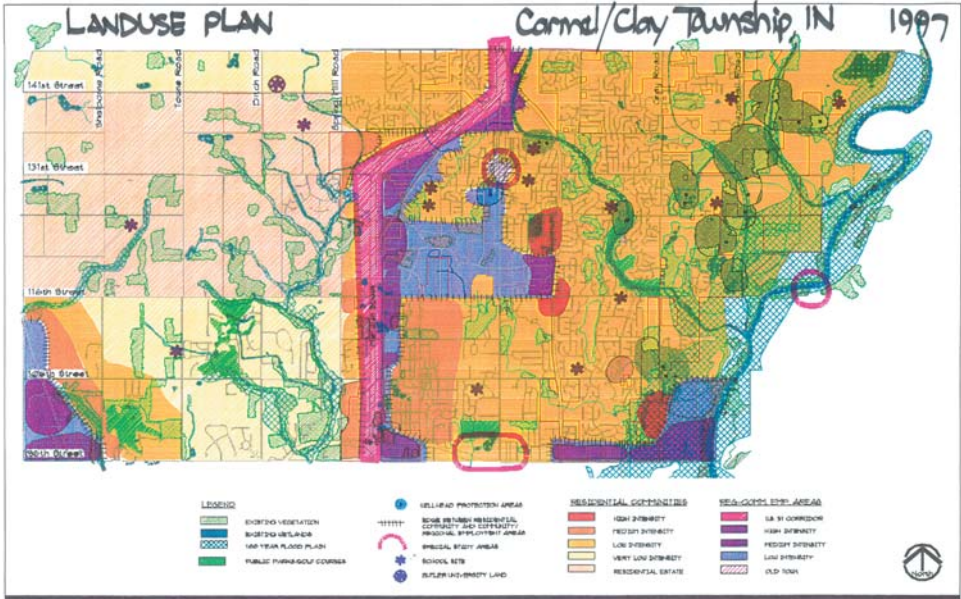




AN ADAPTABLE CITY



The City of Carmel is a stable place because it understands that communities are dynamic, living places that must not be afraid of change, yet still respect the past. By understanding this, the City is able to be proactive in guiding its development future and implementing a land use and zoning structure which continually raises overall quality of life.



The 1997 Land Use Plan
This land use plan, completed at a time when Carmel was facing different development pressures, is outdated. It also illustrates the idea of two dimensional land use as opposed to a discussion of vertical land uses, which are a must in true neighborhood nodes and commercial areas.

Traditional land use planning and zoning in America has been an outgrowth of a 1926 ruling of the Supreme Court in the case of “Ambler Realty Co. vs. The Village of Euclid, Ohio.” When this case was heard, communities were faced with significant environmental issues that came from commercial and industrial land uses. Because of this issue, society “zoned” uses together so that there would be little “mixing” with residential users. While at the time a very important concept towards keeping communities safe, today this issue actually hinders the mixed use communities we love.

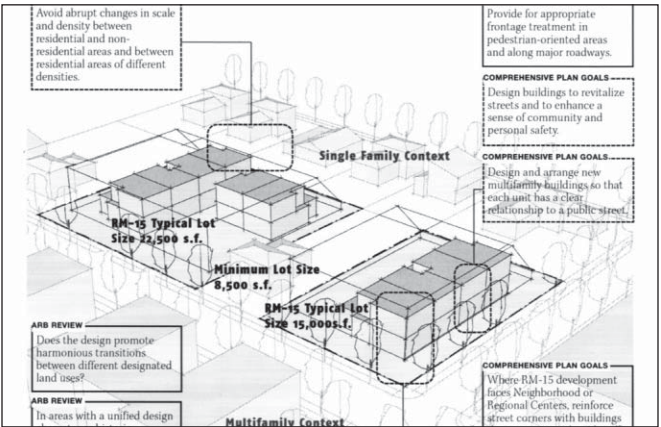
Zoning on the whole tends to protect communities from “bad” development. However, it also is a hindrance to some forms of innovative development, is often difficult to understand and is rarely a promoter of “good” development. Instead of using two dimensional land use mapping and zoning, the City of Carmel should move towards a Form-Based model for regulating and promoting new development, which is informed by best practices of urban planning and design.

ISSUES

- **Zoning Code Complexity.** Tremendous resources are needed to understand traditional zoning codes. They are written, legal documents that include few graphics for easy comprehension.

Form-Based Zoning

This approach to zoning brings graphics, vertical land use and urban design into the development of a City’s code system.



This is an issue for more than just the public development community wanting to know more about their property. It is also an issue for the boards and commissions who interpret these codes, yet often have difficulty understanding the code’s details.

- **Breaking the Rules.** Some of the favorite places in a community are the result of a building or space “breaking the rules” and being unique. When should this happen? Who gets to break the rules? The answers to these questions are not clear, but the point is that communities have to work towards finding opportunities for uniqueness and variety.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Begin a Planning Process for the Central Business District.** A process for physical design in the Central Business District is critical. Also, throughout this process there is a need to seek form-based zoning and overlay opportunities.
- **Create a Design Assistance Process.** Many communities have a “Design Review” process. However, this inherently is a step too late for design assistance from the City. A design assistance process would encourage the development community to meet long before formal design work is completed with City Staff to review overall planning compatibility and to receive design assistance.

RESOURCES

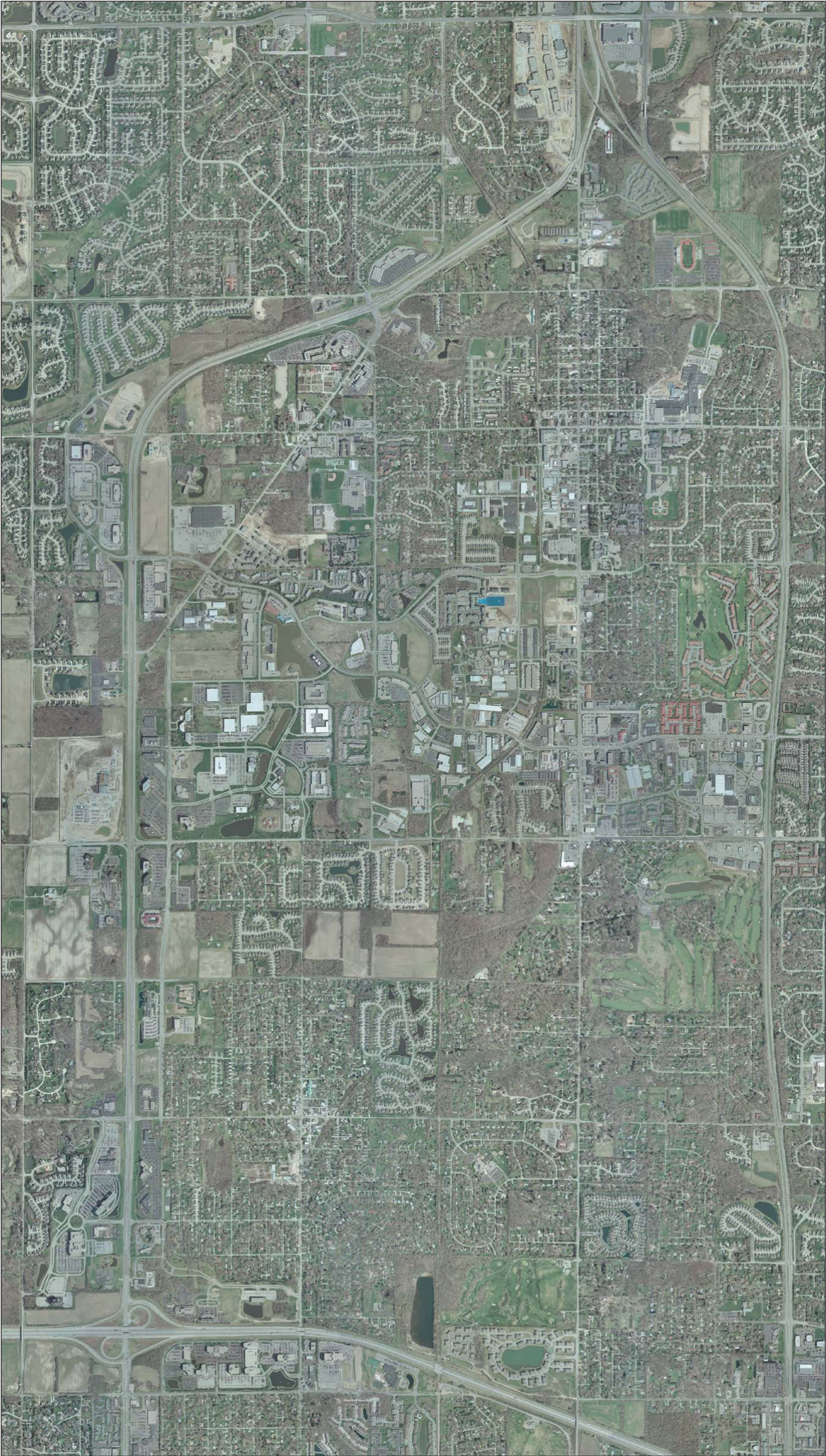
- **BOOK:** “Codifying New Urbanism” (www.CNU.org)
- **WEB:** www.planning.org
- **CITIES:** Austin, TX; Columbus, OH; Arlington, VA

Design Assistance

The City of Carmel could have dramatic impact on development by offering design assistance to the community through a physical design staff member.



A 2004 Aerial Photo of the Central Core of Carmel, Indiana





NEXT STEPS

A healthy dialogue and discussion should follow the reading of this document. As stated at the beginning, this document's purpose is to address attitudes which might lead to a stronger community of Carmel, Indiana, building an even greater quality of life. It will ultimately be the citizens of Carmel that decide what kind of community they would like to be in the future and therefore, they must make their voice known through public discussion, comment, and debate.

Communicating

This document should not only be used as a planning tool, but also as a tool to for communicating the commitment of the City of Carmel towards building a strong city for the future. In this capacity, this document can be shown to business leaders, prospective employers and residents, schools and others to begin the discussion and dialogue that is critical to creating a strong community.

Organizing for the Future

Within this document, six key principles are outlined to guide the future growth of Carmel's Central Core. Each of these principles offers an opportunity for organizing citizens and planning staff to focus on each principle's attitudes and goals. Therefore, the City should work to create committees or organizations under the topics of each principle. These committees would be comprised of citizens, professionals in the related fields, elected officials and planning staff. Each committee would work to become "experts" in finding ways to achieve the principle in the Central Core of Carmel and defending the intentions of the principle in future planning and development activities. This quest for this expertise would include research, education, outreach and discussion in the future.

Creating Simple Design Guidelines or Zoning

Using this document as reference, a new set of design guidelines or "zoning" should be established for the Central Core. In this process, the current zoning ordinance should be reviewed for both clarity and its feasibility in assisting the building of the kind of community outlined in this document. This new set of guidelines or zoning should be graphically-oriented, simple, and clear, lacking the confusing legal language of past ordinances and yet providing definitive direction. The goal of this product will be to give all users the ability to clearly understand both the planning intentions of the City and the guideline's theoretical underpinnings and rationale.

Continuing Education

Building a City is never a task that is complete. It is an on-going effort to create an always higher quality of life and seek opportunities to create an even better community. In this light, the City of Carmel must continue to seek opportunities to educate itself on development practices, land use models and other topics which can assist in bringing knowledge to the community.

C I V I C D E S I G N

The City of Carmel, Indiana

For more information contact:

The City of Carmel, Department of Community Services

317.571.2417 or www.ci.carmel.in.us/services/communityservice